



MELIPHREPTUS CHLOROPSIS: *Gould.*

MELITHREPTUS CHLOROPSIS, *Gould.*

Swan River Honey-eater.

Melithreptus chloropsis, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., November, 1847.

Jin-gee, Aborigines of the lowland, and

Bun-geen, of the mountain districts of Western Australia.

Be-ril-be-ril, Aborigines of Swan River.

THIS species differs from the *Melithreptus lunulatus* in being of a larger size, and in having the bare space above the eyes of a pale green instead of red; in other respects the two birds so closely assimilate, that they are scarcely distinguishable from each other. Individuals in a browner and more dull style of plumage, presenting in fact all the appearances of young birds of the first year, have occasionally been found breeding, a circumstance which has induced many persons to believe them to be distinct; as, however, I found in New South Wales individuals in a similar style of plumage in company and breeding with adult *Melithrepti lunulati*, I am induced to regard these dull-coloured birds as merely precocious examples of the respective species, affording additional evidence of the extreme fecundity of the Australian animals.

The *Melithreptus chloropsis* is a native of Western Australia, where Mr. Gilbert states it is almost always found on the upper branches of the different species of *Eucalypti*, feeding upon the honey of the flowers and insects. Its usual note is a rapidly uttered *twit*, but it occasionally emits a harsh, grating and lengthened cry.

Its flight is of short duration, merely extending from tree to tree in undulating starts.

The nest is usually suspended from the small branches near the top of the gum-trees, where the foliage is thickest, which renders it extremely difficult to detect. A nest found by Mr. Gilbert in October was formed of sheep's wool and small twigs; another found by him in November was attached to a small myrtle-like tree, in a thick gum forest, not more than three feet from the ground; both these nests contained three eggs, nine and a half lines long by six and a half lines broad, of a deep reddish buff, thinly spotted all over, but particularly at the larger end, with dark reddish brown, some of the spots being indistinct, while others were very conspicuous.

The stomach is somewhat muscular, but very diminutive in size, and the food consists of honey, the buds of flowers and small coleoptera.

Upper surface greenish olive; head and chin black; crescent-shaped mark at the occiput and under surface white; wings and tail brown, margined with greenish olive; apical half of the external webs of the primaries narrowly edged with white; irides dull red; bill blackish brown; naked space above the eye greenish white in some, in others pale wine-yellow; tarsi and outer part of the feet light greenish olive; inside of the feet bright yellow.

The Plate represents the two sexes of the natural size.